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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 5th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 10 February 1995, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. KAMAL (Pakistan)

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

ELECTION OF THE BUREAU (continued)

The PRESIDENT said that he had been informed that Mr. Nicolescu (Romania) had been nominated for the post of Vice-President from the Group of Eastern European States for 1995.

Mr. Nicolescu (Romania) was elected Vice-President of the Council for 1995 by acclamation.

BASIC PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE COUNCIL (continued) (E/1995/1 and Add.1, E/1995/8, E/1995/13; E/1995/L.1 and L.2)

The PRESIDENT said that, in accordance with Council resolution 1988/77, he and the members of the Bureau had submitted the draft proposals contained in document E/1995/L.2.

Draft decision I on the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council of 1995

The PRESIDENT said that, in informal consultations, consensus had been reached on the theme for the high-level segment, namely, "Development of Africa, including the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa".

Mr. DELACROIX (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that, in order to establish a link between the high-level segment and the policy dialogue with the representatives of multilateral financial and trade organizations, the European Union proposed that the following phrase should be added to the draft decision:

"Proper consideration should also be given to this theme during the policy dialogue with heads of multilateral financial and trade institutions of the United Nations system".

Mr. MONGBE (Observer for Benin) said that the development of Africa went beyond the sphere of competence of the Bretton Woods institutions. He would prefer the amendment to read: "... dialogue with heads of various institutions, in particular, multilateral financial and trade institutions of the United Nations system". There were many institutions which were involved in

the development of Africa, and would be represented at the high-level segment; African policy-makers would want to have a dialogue with all of them.

Mr. DELACROIX (France) said that the European Union had referred to two categories of institutions because they were normally invited to the policy dialogue. However, it could accept the amendment proposed by the Observer for Benin.

Mr. STOBY (Director of the Division for Policy Coordination and Economic and Social Council Affairs) said that if the Council approved the amendment proposed by the Observer for Benin, it would be moving away from the concept of a one-day policy dialogue as envisaged in General Assembly resolution 45/264. Although that dialogue was intended to involve the multilateral financial and trade institutions, other organizations were able to participate in the high-level segment.

Mr. PANKIN (Russian Federation) said that his delegation's understanding of the policy dialogue with heads of multilateral financial and trade institutions was that it was intended to be a wide-ranging discussion of all questions of concern to members of the Council. It fully supported the idea that the theme of the development of Africa should be one of the questions covered by the dialogue. However, the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 45/264 and 48/162 allowed for all delegations to raise any question of concern to them.

The PRESIDENT said that the French amendment did not imply that the policy dialogue would be confined to the theme of development of Africa.

Mr. PANKIN (Russian Federation) said that his delegation would be reluctant to change the formula of the policy dialogue laid down in General Assembly resolution 45/264.

Mr. DUGAN (United States of America) said that the "Bretton Woods Day" had been designed by the relevant General Assembly and Council resolutions to focus on the heads of multilateral financial and trade institutions. Heads of United Nations development programmes and funds could participate in the operational activities segment, although they were also welcome to attend the "Bretton Woods Day", and had done so in the past. The amendment by the Observer for Benin would run counter to the provisions of General Assembly resolution 48/162 and other resolutions.

Mr. MONGBE (Observer for Benin) said that it had not been his intention to exclude the World Trade Organization, or any other institution, from the policy dialogue.

African development was not confined to financial questions. African delegations wanted to take the opportunity to discuss problems of development with a number of institutions. Since 1991, African delegations had sought to have a theme relating to African development included in the high-level segment, and they now wanted all institutions to be present. Many institutions were involved in the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa; it would not be possible to talk to only two or three institutions and exclude the others.

Mr. DELACROIX (France) said that he wished to reassure the representative of Benin that there would be a dialogue with all institutions of the system during the high-level segment. Perhaps his amendment would be acceptable if the words "of the United Nations system" were deleted; it would thus follow the working of General Assembly resolution 48/162.

Mr. MONGBE (Observer for Benin) asked for an explanation of the format of the high-level segment, who would be invited, and what the legal status of its conclusions would be.

Mr. STOBY (Director of the Division for Policy Coordination and Economic and Social Council Affairs) said that the high-level segment had two sections: a dialogue and discussion of a theme by Governments and a special day, usually the first or second day, devoted to a dialogue with multilateral financial and trade institutions of the United Nations system, namely the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Other organizations had also been able to take part in that dialogue.

Mr. AVALLE (Observer for Argentina) said that it was necessary to distinguish between the two parts of the dialogue. One of the great achievements of General Assembly resolution 45/264 was that for the first time there was a forum where Governments could discuss microeconomic policies with the heads of the multilateral financial and trade institutions. It was very important to maintain a relationship with the Bretton Woods institutions. It was acceptable to have a specific theme for consideration in the policy dialogue. However, it would be unwise to change the terms of reference of

General Assembly resolution 45/264 and to lose the opportunity for that dialogue.

Mr. NKOUNKOU (Congo) said that his delegation agreed that the Council should not depart from the relevant General Assembly resolutions. Further consultations might be needed on the consequences of inviting other institutions to take part in the policy dialogue.

Mr. OJIMBA (Nigeria) said that the African delegations had worked very hard to secure agreement on the theme for the high-level segment and would not want to lose the unique opportunity to focus attention on African development.

The PRESIDENT said that the Council was getting involved in two separate issues. Under the French amendment, the theme of African development would be considered not only in the high-level segment but also in the policy dialogue and there seemed to be full consensus on that point. The Council was now taking up the question of who would be invited to the policy dialogue, although there had not been time to consider that aspect and it would have to be taken up at the next organizational session. In the meantime, he would initiate contacts with the World Trade Organization.

He suggested that the French amendment should be amended to read, "Proper consideration should also be given to this theme during the policy dialogue in the high-level segment".

Draft decision I, as amended, was adopted.

Draft decision II on the coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council of 1995

The PRESIDENT said that, as a result of consultations, consensus had been reached on the following theme for the coordination segment: "Coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of the results of the major international conferences organized by the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields".

Mr. DELACROIX (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union, proposed that the words "and implementation" should be added after "Coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system".

Draft decision II, as orally amended, was adopted.

Draft decision III on the proposed provisional agenda for the substantive session of 1995 of the Economic and Social Council

Mr. MABILANGAN (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, referred to item 9 (b) of the proposed provisional agenda, concerning international cooperation in the field of information systems. He said that the provisions concerning access to United Nations data systems were of considerable importance to developing countries; their implementation, however, had not been very satisfactory, and he wondered why.

The PRESIDENT said that the matter would be referred to the relevant Secretariat unit.

Mr. PANKIN (Russian Federation), referring to items 4 (a) and 6 (e) of the proposed provisional agenda and to document E/1995/L.4, asked whether it was appropriate to retain the various references to the International Conference on Population and Development and to the implementation of its programme of action.

Mr. STOBY (Director of the Division for Policy Coordination and Economic and Social Council Affairs), said that the general segment seemed to be the appropriate place for discussion of those issues; however, document E/1995/L.4 seemed to suggest that they were also to be discussed in the context of operational activities for international development. It was, of course, for the Council to decide. He would welcome guidance from the Council as to whether the documentation being prepared for that discussion should be made available for both discussions.

Mr. MONGBE (Observer for Benin), referring to the question raised by the representative of the Philippines, said that little had been done to implement the various resolutions on the subject of United Nations data systems, and asked what action the Secretariat intended to take to remedy the situation.

Mr. AGONA (Uganda), referring to the agenda for the general segment, and particularly to item 5 (g) (Crime prevention and criminal justice), asked for assurances that the participation of the least developed countries in activities connected with the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders would be funded by the United Nations, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/157 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1994/19.

Mr. STOBY (Director of the Division for Policy Coordination and Economic and Social Council Affairs) said that a great deal had already been

done to implement the resolutions on access to United Nations data systems. The Secretary-General would provide a full report to the Council at its substantive session. As for the matter of the participation of least developed countries in the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, the Secretariat would ensure that the relevant provisions were carried out.

Regarding the discussion of the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development, he suggested that, as a compromise solution, the Council might wish the debate on the issue to take place during the operational activities segment and action on the matter to be taken, without a debate, during the general segment.

The PRESIDENT said he took it that the Council wished to follow that procedure.

It was so decided.

Mr. KOBAYASHI (Japan) said that his delegation would support the deletion of item 6 (e) of the proposed provisional agenda, since the scope of the discussions planned for the working-level meetings in the operational activities segment, as described in document E/1995/L.4, had been expanded to include the question of follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development.

Mr. BAILLARGEON (Canada) proposed that the documents referred to should indeed be made available at the operational activities segment as well as at the general segment, since the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development was to be discussed at the high-level meeting on the first day of the operational activities segment.

Mr. RAMOUL (Observer for Algeria), supported by Mr. MONGBE (Observer for Benin), said that if there was to be no debate at the general segment on the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development, additional time should be devoted to it at the operational activities segment; one day would not be enough for a truly meaningful discussion.

The PRESIDENT said that, while duplication was to be avoided, sufficient importance should indeed be accorded to the subject.

Mr. STOBY (Director of the Division for Policy Coordination and Economic and Social Council Affairs) suggested that even though there would be a high-level discussion of the subject during the operational activities segment,

there would still be room for continued consideration during the general segment. It would be well, therefore, to leave the issue on the agenda for the general segment, at which informal consultations would be held in order to prepare a resolution to be adopted during that segment.

Mr. RAMOUL (Observer for Algeria), supported by Mr. MONGBE (Observer for Benin) and Mr. DELACROIX (France), said that the solution seemed satisfactory.

Draft decision III was adopted.

Draft decision IV on regional cooperation

Draft decision IV was adopted.

Mr. KOBAYASHI (Japan) said that his delegation had been pleased to join the consensus on the draft decision on the understanding that it placed the highest importance of South-South cooperation, but that it wanted to allow extra time for the regional commissions to prepare for the discussion.

Draft decision V on consideration of reports of intergovernmental bodies

Draft decision V was adopted.

Draft decision VI on the basic programme of work of the Economic and Social Council for 1996

Draft decision VI was adopted.

Draft decision VII on the Commission on Population and Development and periodicity of its meetings

Draft decision VII was adopted.

Draft decision VIII on the dates of the fourth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

Draft decision VIII was adopted.

Draft decision IX on the dates of the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders

Draft decision IX was adopted.

Draft decision X on the dates of the twelfth Meeting of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance

Draft decision X was adopted.

Draft decision on the operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation segment (E/1995/L.4)

Mr. GERVAIS (Côte d'Ivoire) said that the text of draft decision E/1995/L.4 had been the subject of extensive and constructive consultations, which had led to a consensus.

Mr. RAMOUL (Observer for Algeria) expressed the concern of his delegation over the growing tendency of decisions taken during the Council's organizational session to have more to do with the substance of issues than with organizational matters. He hoped that the Secretariat would take due note of that concern.

Mr. MONGBE (Observer for Benin) agreed that matters of substance outside the competence of the organizational session had been taken up. The provisions of General Assembly resolution 48/162 on the restructuring and revitalization of the Economic and Social Council must be respected in the future.

Mr. MABILANGAN (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that he shared the concerns expressed by Algeria and Benin.

Mr. STOBY (Director of the Division for Policy Coordination and Economic and Social Council Affairs) said that he had taken due note of the expressions of concern, which seemed to suggest that the Secretariat should play a larger role in the drafting of legislation to come before the Council.

With regard to the third paragraph under "Day 1" of the draft decision, he requested further guidance on the type of documentation the Council had in mind. Normally, the outcome of a conference such as the World Summit for Social Development would have no official status until action had been taken by the General Assembly.

With regard to information from the specialized agencies and related organizations, for most items, he pointed out that, in accordance with past practice, the Council would have asked the Secretary-General to consolidate the contributions of the specialized agencies into a single document. As it stood, the draft decision would result in a proliferation of reports that might prove difficult to deal with.

Turning to "Day 2", in the second paragraph, the draft decision did not contain an actual request for a report of the Secretary-General concerning the comprehensive triennial policy review. He wondered if that was an inadvertent omission or a conscious decision to change the existing procedure.

The PRESIDENT said that the change in procedure regarding the specialized agencies had arisen from the concern that, since there would be only one spokesman, the individual agencies would not see their separate points of

view represented. Their views would thus be conveyed through an individual paper; no synthesis document was desired.

With regard to paragraph 3 under "Day 2", the following sentence should be added at the end of the paragraph: "In this context, the Council shall have before it for consideration the Secretary-General's report on the comprehensive triennial policy review."

Draft decision E/1995/L.4, as amended, was adopted.

The PRESIDENT said he took it that the Council would take up at its resumed organizational session the manner in which the report of the World Summit for Social Development was to be discussed at the high-level meeting.

It was so decided.

Draft decision on international cooperation against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotics and psychotropic substances and related activities (E/1995/L.5)

Mr. MABILANGAN (Philippines), introducing the draft decision on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that it was aimed at resolving apparent contradictions in some General Assembly draft resolutions, and stressed that it in no way prejudged the consideration of other items at the high-level segment.

Mr. DELACROIX (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union, reiterated the Union's reservations to the draft decision on procedural grounds, and suggested other alternatives, such as holding high-level discussions on the drug problem at a later date during the session, or deferring discussion to the organizational session in 1996.

Mr. KOBAYASHI (Japan) reminded the Council of its heavy schedule of upcoming meetings and other obligations. While the subject of narcotic drugs merited attention at a high political level, the draft decision allowed for the consideration of alternative themes as late as the Council's 1996 organizational session.

The PRESIDENT said that, in the light of the opposition to the draft decision, the Council was faced with a choice between two undesirable alternatives: to change the word "Decides" in paragraph 1 to "Strongly recommends", or to postpone a decision on the matter until its resumed organizational session.

After a discussion in which Mr. MONGBE (Observer for Benin), Mr. DELACROIX (France), Ms. MORGAN (Mexico) and Mr. MABILANGAN (Philippines) took part,

the PRESIDENT said he took it that the Council wished to defer further discussion of the item to the following meeting.

It was so decided.

COMMITTEE FOR DEVELOPMENT PLANNING (continued) (E/1995/L.3)

Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece) introduced draft decision E/1995/L.3.

Draft decision E/1995/L.3 was adopted.

AGENDA FOR DEVELOPMENT

The PRESIDENT reminded members that in its resolution 49/126, the General Assembly had decided to establish an ad-hoc open-ended working group to elaborate further an action-oriented comprehensive agenda for development. The Assembly had also requested the Council to consider ways and means of providing further substantive input to the work of the ad hoc working group. The discussions at the Council's high-level and coordination segments would be an important input for that work. In order to establish a framework for such an exchange of views, he suggested that he should be authorized to invite the President of the General Assembly to make a statement before the Council at its upcoming session.

It was so decided.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS (continued)

Extraordinary additional session of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1995 (E/1995/8; E/1995/L.1)

The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to document E/1995/8, which contained a draft decision transmitted to the Council by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. A statement of the programme budget implications of the draft decision was contained in document E/1995/L.1. He took it that the Council wished to adopt the draft decision in document E/1995/8.

It was so decided.

Mr. BARNETT (United Kingdom) stated that as a reflection of the importance it attached to the work of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the United Kingdom had been happy to join the consensus on the draft decision. It noted with regret, however, that in the Secretariat's judgement, additional resources would be required to fund the substantive costs connected with two extraordinary meetings of the Committee to be held in 1995. It hoped that after further consideration by the Advisory Committee on

Administrative and Budgetary Questions and by the Fifth Committee at its forthcoming resumed session, no additional appropriation would prove necessary. If, however, the requirement for additional resources remained and could not subsequently be met from the contingency fund, his delegation expected that the provisions of General Assembly resolution 41/213 would apply, namely, that the additional requirements should be met by redeploying resources from low-priority areas or modifying existing activities. If that proved impossible, consideration should be given to deferring the extraordinary meetings of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights until a later biennium.

Mr. USUI (Japan) stated that, while his delegation joined in the consensus, it could not fully endorse the draft decision, as his Government was of the view that the backlog of reports from States Parties might be partly due to the Committee's working procedures. His delegation therefore hoped that the Committee would first review its working methods in the context of its original mandate, so that it could concentrate more on periodic reports, thereby eliminating the need for extraordinary additional sessions.

Letter dated 3 February 1995 from the Chairperson of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations to the President of the Council

The PRESIDENT drew attention to a letter dated 3 February 1995 from the Chairperson of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations to the President of the Council (E/1995/13), requesting the rescheduling of the Committee's 1995 session to some time during the second quarter of 1995. While an extremely heavy schedule of meetings precluded setting a firm new date, there appeared to be a possibility of accommodating the session during April. He therefore suggested that the Bureau of the Council should continue to look for appropriate dates in consultation with the Chairperson of the Committee.

Ms. LIM (Philippines) reminded the Committee that the Commission on the Status of Women would be holding its thirty-ninth session from 15 March to 4 April, when it would be conducting its final consideration of the platform of action of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, to be held in Beijing. The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations would also be considering many applications for consultative status, as well as the quadrennial reports of non-governmental organizations in status, all of which would require time. In view of the considerable burden that the sessions of such important bodies would place on

delegations, she hoped that the Secretariat could resolve the problem by deferring the session of the Committee.

Mr. DELACROIX (France) pointed out a further potential scheduling conflict with the session of the Working Group on the Review of Arrangements for Consultations with Non-Governmental Organizations.

Mr. STOBY (Director of the Division for Policy Coordination and Economic and Social Council Affairs) said that, given the heavy schedule of meetings, scheduling conflicts were inevitable. He suggested that the Council should revert to the matter at the following meeting.

The PRESIDENT said he took it that the Committee agreed that the Bureau should continue to look for appropriate dates for the rescheduled meeting of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.